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INFORMATION REPORT

221883

COUNTRY USSR

DATE DISTR. 19 July 1948

SUBJECT German Troops in the USSR ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ NO. OF PAGES 2

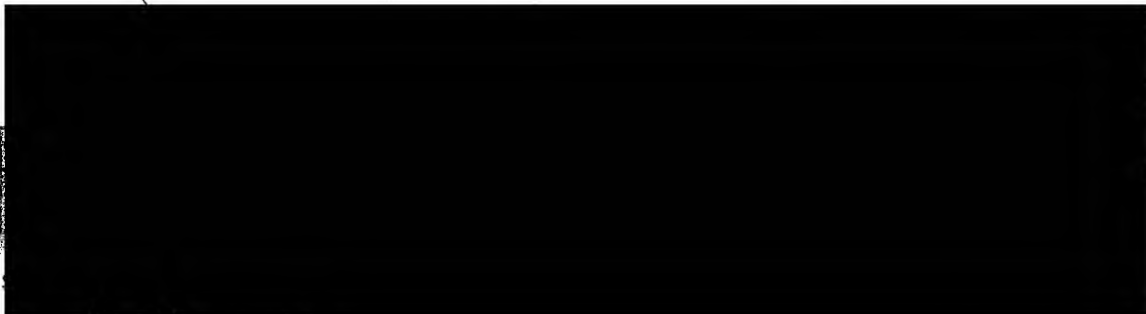
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REPORT NO.



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1. In October and November 1947, a number of German armored force troops were captured by Polish and Estonian partisans in the territory between Brest-Litovsk and Minsk. These soldiers stated that they were members of a "Free German Force" which was stationed in Minsk and was assisting local Soviet Army units in combatting guerrillas. The German force consisted not only of Wehrmacht veterans originally in Russian captivity, but also of men who had returned from PW camps in the United States and had been promptly seized and carried into Russia upon their return to their homes in eastern Germany. The Germans, most of whom were professional soldiers, had been recruited on a volunteer basis. Some claimed, however, that compulsion ranging from high-powered propaganda to open threats had been used in the recruiting drive. The Germans were told that they would never be stationed in Germany. Food and equipment were of a high order, and discipline was exceptionally strict.
2. The largest individual "Free German" unit is said to be the brigade, with a complement of 7,000 men. The German prisoners were ignorant of the total strength of the German forces in Russia, but believed it came to between 100,000 and 150,000 men. Three armored brigades, bearing the names "Hamburg", "Lüneburg", and "Stuttgart", had been formed. The "Hamburg" brigade was equipped with Russian T-41 tanks, while the other two possessed T-34's. It was rumored that a fourth armored brigade, the "München", had been organized and consisted of former members of the Sixth SS Panzer Army. This unit was said to be stationed in the Caucasus region.
3. A German first lieutenant who had been captured by partisans near Vilna claimed that those PW's who refused to enlist in the "Free German Forces" were sentenced to perform the hardest sort of labor and were assigned to the lowest ration category. Enlistments in the "Free German Forces" were for three-year periods. Recruits were told that they would be free to return to their homes in

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Germany upon the termination of their periods of service, but few actually believe that this will be the case.

4. The above-mentioned German officer also told of a recruiting campaign which the Russians are conducting among German PW's from the Sudetenland, East Prussia, the Polish-administered regions of Germany, and the German colonies elsewhere in eastern Europe. These men, who can no longer return to their old homes, are being offered a new homeland in Siberia. They are encouraged to marry those nurses and other female auxiliaries of the Wehrmacht who are still in Russian captivity and German women who were seized when Poland and the Baltic states were overrun in 1944. German officers and intellectuals are also occasionally permitted to marry selected Russian women before being sent to the new colony in Siberia.

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